

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

26TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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VA MAKING BAD DECISION ON CLINIC, HINCHEY CHARGES

CONGRESSMAN WRITES LETTER OF APPEAL

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today criticized the Veterans Administration for its decision to indefinitely postpone the opening of a Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Ithaca. The VA informed Hinchey last week of its decision to halt plans for the opening of the clinic in November.

"Veterans in Tompkins County have been waiting a long time for this clinic," said Hinchey. "After all of the obstacles that have been overcome to get this far, it's simply unacceptable that this facility will not be opening as scheduled."

In October 2000 the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center at Syracuse awarded to Cayuga Medical Center (CMC) a contract to operate two CBOCs at CMC's sites in Cortlandville and Ithaca. Cortland Memorial Hospital filed a protest against the award that was dismissed by the Contracting Officer. Cortland appealed this decision to the General Accounting Office, which recommended that the VA reevaluate its decision. The VA then reopened the bid and again awarded the contract to CMC.

The Ithaca clinic was originally scheduled to open in July, but the opening was pushed back to November because of the time it took to adjudicate the dispute. The clinic in Cortlandville has been operating since January 2.

Last week the VA contacted Hinchey to inform him that the opening in Ithaca would again be postponed because of budget constraints. There was no indication of when the clinic would be able to begin seeing veterans. Hinchey today wrote to the VA appealing this decision. A copy of the letter is attached.